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(53) Title of the Invention: Medium Gas Control Apparatus for Excimer Laser

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Specifications

- 1. Title of the Invention: Medium Gas Control Apparatus for Excimer Laser
- 2. Scope of the Patent's Claims
- 1) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that it is equipped with a medium gas circulation system enabling in a closed loop which is sealed from the outside circulation of the medium gas in an excimer laser device, with a device controlling the amount and the concentration of halogen gas in the medium gas that is circulated inside an excimer laser apparatus containing a halogen gas and a rare gas used as laser activation medium;

a halogen adding means which adds to medium gas inside a medium gas circulation system halogen gas generated by decomposition, containing a metal halogenide inside a closed container which is linked to the medium gas circulation system;

an impurity removing means which removes impurities containing unnecessary halogenide in the medium gas, inserted in the medium gas circulation system;

and with a halogen concentration control system which controls the amount of the halogen gas generated with the halogen adding means, so as to achieve a specified value for the concentration of the medium gas halogen which corresponds to a range of values from the detected value of the halogen concentration in the medium gas to an estimated value.

- 2) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 2, characterized by the fact that halogen gas is generated by a halogen adding means with thermal decomposition of a metal halogenide.
- 3) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 2, characterized by the fact that the halogen is fluorine, and that CoF₃ is used as a metal halogenide.
- 4) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 2, characterized by the fact that the halogen is fluorine, and that AgF₂ is used as a metal halogenide.
- 5) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 2, characterized by the fact that halogen gas is generated with optical decomposition of metal halogenide by a halogen adding means;

wherein a halogen concentration means controls the optical amount to achieve optical decomposition of metal halogenide inside this halogen adding means.

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- 6) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 5, characterized by the fact that the halogen is fluorine, and that AgF is used as a metal halogenide.
- 7) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 6, characterized by the fact that AgF is used to achieve optical decomposition with ultraviolet rays.
- 8) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that the halogen adding means is inserted directly in the medium gas circulation system.
- 9) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that the impurity removing means is equipped with a filter

which removes solid impurities.

- 10) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 2, characterized by the fact that the impurity removing means is equipped with a low-temperature trap which removes impurities in the gaseous state from the medium gas.
- 11) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that the impurity removing means is inserted at the point of the inflow of the medium gas flowing to an excimer laser device in a medium gas circulation system.
- 12) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that the concentration of halogen in the medium gas is estimated from the strength of the laser light output by an excimer laser device.
- 13) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 1, characterized by the fact that the concentration of halogen in the medium gas is detected by a gas analyzer.
- 14) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 13, characterized by the fact that the spectral absorption mode is used by a gas analyzer.
- 15) The control device of the medium gas control apparatus of excimer laser described in claim 13, characterized by the fact that the gas used by the gas analyzer is extracted from the medium gas at the point when it is detected, with an excimer laser device deployed in a medium gas circulation system.
- 3. Detailed Explanation of the Invention

(Sphere of Industrial Use)

This invention relates to a medium gas control device that is suitable for short wave laser oscillations, for instance with ultraviolet rays, etc., in order to control the amount as well as the concentration of halogen in a medium gas which is circulated in an excimer laser device containing halogen gas and rare gas used as a laser activation medium.

(Prior Art Technology)

It is known that the excimer laser mentioned above is a gas laser device generating short wave ultraviolet rays, wherein an excimer laser uses approximately 2,000 §. Ar, Kr, Xe, and similar rare gas molecules and P_2 or similar halogen molecules are used as an activation medium of an excimer laser, activated with a so called timer which is linked to individual molecules. Several types of naturally discharged rays are created during a discharge during dissociation of this excimer laser, and laser oscillations are initiated after that when the rays are used to induce a discharge. A laser type of the excimer laser supplies a diluted medium gas with a buffer gas containing a laser activation substance which is a halogen and a rare gas creating an excimer, so that the laser activation substance is excited with an excimer for instance with an electric

discharge. Incidentally, because the halogen contained in this medium gas is highly reactive, in particular at high temperatures, which can easily cause a binding reaction with an impurity if a small amount of impurity is contained in the medium gas, or with structural materials used in the laser type inside the laser device, the concentration of halogen inside the medium gas can be quickly reduced during the operation of laser oscillations, resulting in a decreased laser output which is generally due to changes in the composition of such a medium gas. That is why it is important to ensure a constant flow of the medium gas inside the laser pipe during activation with the the laser activation substance and during continuous oscillations of the excimer laser.

Although the simplest method to ensure flow of medium gas that does not contain useless impurities during laser oscillations in the laser pipe is to supply new gas medium, because impurities generated by the reaction causing binding with halogen will exert an undesirable influence on laser oscillations, expensive rare gas contained in the medium gas will thus be unnecessarily consumed even if the conduction ratio is reduced to the lowest allowable limit.

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In addition, harmful halogen gas will be discharged to an external part. That is why so called medium gas supplying methods have been employed according to the so called circulation method returning to the laser pipes consumed and reacted halogen gas when useless impurities have been removed from the medium gas while the medium gas is circulated in the laser pipe. The amount of the consumed medium gas can be reduced with such a method according to prior art to $1/5 \sim 1/10$. This means that, conversely, the life span of the medium gas can be extended 5 ~ 10 times. New gas can be supplied again as necessary with a special pump.

(Problems To Be Solved By This Invention)

Incidentally, if halogen and fluorine gas in particular are stored in the impure status, this would cause a danger level that cannot be tolerated. That is why the above described halogen gases are stored in a diluted status and at low temperatures Accordingly, when halogen is supplied to medium gas, it must be supplied together with a buffer gas and the medium gas must then be discharged from the circulation system in the amount corresponding to the amount of the buffer gas. Because this discharged medium gas includes obviously also diluted gas, this will result in a loss of the diluted gas, that is to say a loss of the laser activation substance. It goes without saying that halogen gas will be also discharged as a harmful gas to an external part. Further, because the buffer gas which makes up most of the discharged medium gas uses normally a rare gas which is separated from the laser activation substance, the result is that rare gas is again consumed unnecessarily in the form of a buffer gas. The only means that can be used to solve this problem is to stop supplying medium gas in the form of diluted halogen gas. One conceivable method would be to use electro-dialysis of molten KHF2, which is widely used for industrial purposes, for instance when fluorine is generated, so that every time when only the required amount of fluorine is supplied, a pure form can be generated. However, the electrolysis apparatus is quite hard to operate and also inherently dangerous. Specifically, because a medium gas is normally used at $2 \sim 3$ atmospheres with an excimer laser, the fluorine components must be also compressed. Moreover, it is quite difficult to achieve an equal compression in the region between the cathode and the anode during electro dialysis.

Further, because the required fluorine gas is generated on the anode side with the required fluorine gas obtained from electro dialysis, unnecessary hydrogen gas will be also generated on the cathode side, and when both gases are mixed, this will cause and an instant explosion.

In order to solve the above mentioned problems, the purpose of this invention is to provide an excimer laser medium gas control apparatus which makes it possible to supply halogen gas with a simple and safe means to medium gas, enabling to generate halogen gas in a pure form, while at the sam time, a medium gas that does not contain unnecessary impurities generated by halogen reaction can be circulated in an excimer laser apparatus.

(Means To Solve Problems)

In order to achieve the above described objective, the present invention uses a construction of a medium gas control device for excimer laser linking the halogen amount and the concentration in the medium conducted inside an excimer laser device containing halogen and rare gas, as well as laser activation substances;

comprising a medium gas circulation system enabling to circulate medium gas passing through an excimer laser inside a closed lop which is sealed off from the external part;

a halogen adding means which adds halogen into the medium gas circulation system when halogen gas is generated by decomposition of metal halogenide inside a closed container which is linked to a medium gas circulation system;

and an impurity removing means removing impurities having unnecessary halogenized substance contained in the medium gas that is introduced into the medium gas circulation system;

creating the construction of a halogen concentration controlling system which controls the generated amount of halogen gas with the halogen adding means so as to maintain a specific value with respect to the concentration of halogen in the medium gas, corresponding to the detected value or presumed value of halogen concentration in the medium gas.

(Operation)

This invention makes it possible to utilize metal halogenides as a source for generation of halogen with the above described construction, the halogen adding means of this instruction contains a metal halogenide inside a closed container and this metal halogenide is decomposed through thermal decomposition or optical decomposition, so that halogen is generated in pure form and added to the medium gas.

Because metal fluorides are particularly suitable as a metal halogenide, it is possible to use CoF₂ or AgF₂ for thermal decomposition, and AgP can be used for optical decomposition.

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When CoF_2 is heated to $500 \sim 700$ \sim C and AgF_2 is heated at a lower temperature, fluorine can be easily generated from these components and tests have indicated that fluorine can be generated by this without apparent steam with thermal decomposition at higher temperatures. When AgF is irradiated at a relatively low temperature with ultraviolet rays, optical decomposition can be achieved relatively easily and steam is obviously not generated with a metal. Also, because the heating temperature can be controlled in case of thermal decomposition by controlling the optical amount, this enables to control the rate of the generated halogen gas at any level and halogen gas can thus be generated so that it can be supplied as required to a medium gas.

Because halogen gas generated with a similar halogen gas adding means will not have a very high level of purity, even when this gas is added to medium gas, this will not increase the volume of the medium gas or the pressure. Accordingly, when a closed loop is created with a medium gas circulation system which is sealed off from the outside system, this makes it possible to avoid rare gas in the external part during supplying and adding of halogen gas as was the case according to prior art, which renders discharging of harmful halogen gas unnecessary.

However, when a similar type of a medium gas circulation system uses a closed loop, impurities created by a binding reaction with halogen gas inside an unmodified excimer laser apparatus will be deposited in the loop and because this would exert a detrimental influence on the oscillations of the laser, the construction of this invention employs an impurity removing means inserted in the medium gas circulation system, removing impurities including unnecessary halogenides contained in the medium gas. These impurities can be in the solid form or in gas form. Impurities in forms ranging from solid to powder form can be removed with a filter. On the other hand, since impurities in the gas form will be mainly HF, NO₂, CF₄, etc., they can be removed with an adsorbant. For example, the simplest design that can be used for this purpose is a low-temperature trap cooled with liquid nitrogen.

Because a halogen concentration controlling system can be used to exercise control by controlling the optical amount of optical decomposition or the temperature of thermal decomposition, halogen can be generated with a desired ratio. However, to exercise this control with a desired precision, the concentration of halogen inside the medium gas must be detected with the highest possible precision. Although the most logical way to detect with precision this halogen concentration would be with a gas analyzer, because the halogen concentration in the medium gas will in reality be decreasing, the laser output will be also reduced and this can be used to estimate the halogen concentration indirectly from the laser output, which is normally sufficient as well as practical.

(Embodiment)

The following is an explanation of an embodiment of this invention which is based on the enclosed figures. In the embodiment below, Kr is used for rare gas in the laser activation substance and fluorine is used for halogen, while Ar is used for the buffer gas. Figure 1 shows an embodiment enabling to generate fluorine gas by thermal decomposition with halogen adding

As shown in Figure 1, laser pipe 11, inserted in the main unit of excimer laser device 10, is enclosed on both ends of the pipe by transparent windows 12. Outside of these windows 12 is formed a partial reflection mirror 15 and a total reflection mirror 16, forming a laser oscillation system. In the extended parts on the left and on the side of laser pipe 11 is deployed a pair of discharge electrodes 13, enabling excitation of Kr and fluorine contained in the medium gas inside the laser pipe by the discharge created with both electrodes 13, 13 with a source of high voltage 14. Laser oscillations generated by this excitation create laser beams LB on the side of partial reflection mirror 15, creating laser beams which are output toward the left side of the figure.

Inlet openings 11a and 11b, created for the medium gas on both end parts of laser pipe 11, are connected by the pipes of the medium gas circulation system 20. Medium gas circulation system 20 includes a fan 21 used for gas circulation, creating a gas loop which is closed off from the pipes and from the valves, while halogen adding means 30 and impurity removing means 50 are inserted in this loop. Because valve 22 opens into the air during the initial filling when medium gas is supplied initially into the medium gas circulation system, this valve is always closed during operations.

Because halogen adding means 30 contains an electric heating plate 32 inside a closed container 31 and a dish 33 in which metal halogenide MH is placed, the temperature of the metal halogenide MH can be thus controlled with precision with attached electric heating plate 34. Because in this example, closed container 31 is provided with an output and input opening, the medium gas contained inside the medium gas circulation system can thus flow directly into the closed container 31.

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However, the container can be also connected to the pipe arrangement of the medium gas circulation system with a joint output and input opening. The metal halogenide MH, which can be for instance CoF3, is heated by electric heating plate 32 to $500 \sim 700$ °. Because the medium gas can easily react with fluorine in the part that is heated to a high temperature, it is desirable to use Monel metal as the material of electric heating plate 32 and dish 33.

Impurity removing means 50 comprises a low-temperature trap containing filter 51. The low-temperature trap contains a low-temperature container 52 inserted in jacket 53 which can be filled for instance with liquid nitrogen 54 to provide cooling. Impurities are condensed in the gaseous state in the medium gas which is introduced from inlet opening 53 and purified medium gas is introduced from outlet opening 52B. Solid impurities contained in the medium gas are removed with filter 51 and impurities in the gaseous states, for instance HP, NO₂, CF₄, etc., are removed with the low-temperature trap. This impurity removing means 50 is preferably deployed in close proximity to the inlet flow point of the medium gas flowing to excimer laser device 10, in the medium gas circulation system 20 of this embodiment. This makes it possible to prevent penetration of impurities which could be mixed into the medium gas and attached to halogen adding means 30 and the pipe arrangement of the medium gas circulation system 20 inside the

Halogen concentration control system 60, which can have for instance microcomputer construction, is connected to operating device 61, such as a keyboard of input interface 60a. Signal Sa, furnished to this input interface 60a, contains the estimated value of halogen concentration in the medium gas. Laser beams are received from a beam splitter of small mirror 62a placed in the path of laser beams LB transmitted from the excimer laser device and then transmitted from optical detector 62. In this embodiment, gas analyzer 62 is connected via valves 63a and 63b on the side of the outflow of the medium gas from the excimer laser device to the medium gas circulation system. The subsequent halogen concentration detection value Sb is also input to input interface 60a of the microcomputer in the halogen concentration control system 60. This halogen detection value Sb is useful during the initial filling conducted with the medium gas in medium circulation system 20 and laser pipe 11 of the excimer laser device, while estimated value Sa is useful for halogen control during normal operations.

The microcomputer compares the estimated value Sa to a standard value which has been set in advance via operating device 61. If the estimated value Sa is below the standard value, temperature setting value St is furnished to temperature regulator 34 of halogen adding means 30 through the output interface 60b.

Pumps $71 \sim 73$ which are indicated in the lower part on the left side of Figure 1 are used for initial filling operations when the required medium gas is supplied to laser pipe 11 and medium gas circulation system 20. It is possible to use for instance Kr for pump 71, Ar can be used as buffer gas with pump 72, and Ar can be used as rare gas for fluorine with pump 73. Each of the pumps $71 \sim 73$ is provided with accessory pressure reducing valves $71a \sim 73a$. Flow amount regulating valves $74 \sim 76$ are connected on the output side of the pumps. In addition, medium gas circulation system 20 is connected via joint valve 77. When filling with the medium gas is conducted during the initial filling operations in the status when pressure reducing valves $71a \sim 73a$ and joint valve 77 are opened, gas will be supplied to medium gas circulation system 20 when the open instruction is sent from halogen concentration control means 60 to respective flow amount regulating valves $74 \sim 76$.

The ratio of the components of the medium gas can be in this case for instance as follows: 96.5 % of Ar, 3.0 % of Kr, and 0.5 % of fluorine. After the initial gas medium filling operation has been completed, the halogen gas concentration is verified by gas analyzer 63 and valve 77 as well as all the pressure reducing valves $71a \sim 73a$ are closed. Because of that, medium gas circulation system 20 will be cut off from the initial filling system and a closed loop which is completely sealed off from the external part will be formed.

When the excimer laser device having the above described construction and its medium gas control apparatus are used and an instruction is sent to high-voltage power source 14 of excimer laser device 10 using a microcomputer for halogen concentration control system 60, this will cause a discharge and excitation of the medium gas contained inside laser tube 11, enabling to conduct laser oscillations. When Kr is used for fluorine as the laser activation substance in this embodiment, the wavelength of the laser beams will be 2,480 \P . Halogen concentration control system 60 will send a detection instruction DS which is synchronized with laser oscillations to

optical detector 62 and the estimated value Sa will be read as described above. Based on this value, control over the fluorine concentration will be exercised as described above.

Figure 2 explains an embodiment of this invention which uses an optical analyzer for a metal halogenide with halogen adding means 40.

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Because all the components of this embodiment with the exception of the halogen adding means are shown in Figure 1, only the halogen gas adding means 40 which is shown in the figure will now be explained. The main unit of this halogen adding means is a closed container 41 which is equipped with a transparent window 42 that can be made for instance from calcium fluoride. The means contains a mounted dish 43 with metal halogenide MH below this window. Also in this embodiment, the output and inlet openings of closed container 41 are connected directly to the pipe arrangement of the medium gas circulation system 20 and the medium gas is circulated inside the closed container 41. For the metal halogen MH can be used for instance AgF as explained above. A xenon lamp or a mercury lamp, etc., used for optical decomposition with optical source 44 for a source of ultraviolet rays, is thus operated with lighting circuit 45.

When ultraviolet rays are received from ultraviolet ray source 44, the rays will pass through lens 46 and through window 42 to be condensed on metal halogenide MH. Because this light can be controlled by a restrictor 47 or by a slit deployed with operating device 38 in the path of the ultraviolet light, the amount of the ultraviolet light passing through constrictor 47 can thus be controlled with operating device 48. A specified value Sl is input based on estimated value Sa for the halogen concentration from a microcomputer controlling the halogen concentration with the same halogen concentration control system 60 as in the previous embodiment with operating device 48. Operating device 48 controls the degree of opening of restrictor 47 by matching this degree to the specified value Sl, and the amount of the generated fluorine is controlled by halogen adding means 40. Although not shown in the figure, a heating plate is deployed underneath the dish 43 to make it possible to heat up slightly metal halogenide MH, enabling to accelerate optical decomposition.

This invention is not limited only to the above explained embodiment as various modes of this invention can be realized. Since different types of halogens and/or metal halogenides can be selected, this enables different variations within the scope of this invention corresponding to the control mode used for the halogen concentration. Although in the above described embodiment, a buffer gas and rare gas halogen were pumped from a pump during the initial filling operation to a laser tube and a medium circulation system, it is also possible to generate halogen from a halogen adding means generating halogen from a halogen adding means for the initial filling operation. And although the temperatures set for the halogen adding means and the optical amount setting value were based on a detected value of the halogen detected by a gas analyzer using optical detector 62 receiving one part of all the laser beams, it is also possible to specify the value based on a detected value of halogen which is detected by the gas analyzer. However, since in this case, impurities contained in the medium cause could cause problems for the gas analyzer, it is desirable when a compact impurity removing means of the type explained in the embodiment above is employed on the side where the gas is analyzed.

(Effect of the Invention)

As was explained above, because this invention makes it possible to add medium gas inside a medium gas circulating system when halogen gas is generated in a pure form by inducing disassociation of metal halogenides with a halogen adding means, this enables supplying without increasing in the amount of the medium gas the amount of consumed elements of halogen gas generated by a reaction inside a laser pipe, etc. Because this enables a closed loop which completely closes off the medium gas circulating system from the external part, it is no longer necessary to discharge rare gas or halogen gas into the external part as was the case during supplying according to prior art. Therefore, not only is it possible to greatly reduce the amount of consumed rare gas, but this design also makes it possible to eliminate discharging of harmful halogen gas. Further, since an impurity removing means is inserted into the medium gas circulation system, this removes harmful and unnecessary impurities generated by the operation of an excimer laser apparatus and the medium gas can thus be circulated at all times without a content of impurities in the excimer laser device, enabling to maintain continuous laser oscillation operations under optimal conditions.

Because the operating cost of an excimer laser device can thus be reduced in this manner while harmful substances which can cause a number of problems can be efficiently prevented, this enables to apply automatic control to the composition of a medium gas obtained from a halogen concentration control system. It can thus be expected that the present design will bring a significant contribution to further development of practical designs of excimer laser devices.

4. Brief Explanation of Figures

Both figures relate to the present invention. Figure 1 and Figure 2 explain the construction of embodiments of an excimer laser medium gas control device using thermal decomposition and optical decomposition of metal halogenides during generation of halogen with a halogen adding means. The figures show:

10: excimer laser device, 11: laser pipe, 11a: laser tube inlet opening, 11b: laser tube outlet opening, 12: transparent window, 13: discharge electrode, 14: discharge high-voltage power source, 15: partial reflection mirror, 16: total reflection mirror, 20: medium gas circulation system, 21: halogen gas circulation fan, 22: discharge valve, 30: halogen adding means for thermal decomposition of metal halogenides,

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31: closed container, 32: heating plate, 33: dish, 34: temperature regulator, 40: metal halogenide optical decomposition halogen adding means, 41: closed container, 42: transparent window, 43: dish, 44: source of ultraviolet rays, 45: lighting circuit, 46: condensing lens, 47: constrictor, 48: constricting operation controlling device, 50: impurity removing means, 51: filter, 52: low-temperature trap of a low-temperature container, 52a, 52b: outlet/inlet openings of a low-temperature container, 53: jacket, 54: liquid nitrogen, 60: halogen concentration control system with a microcomputer, 60a: microcomputer input interface, 60b: microcomputer output interface,

62: laser output detection optical detector, 62: small mirror, 63: gas analyzer, 63a, 63b: gas analyzer gas drawing valve, 71: Kr pump, 72: Ar pump, 73: Ar rare gas pump, 71a: ~73b: pressure reducing valves, 74 ~ 76: flow amount regulating valve, 77: medium gas initial filling valve, DS: detection instruction, LB: laser beam, MH: metal halogenide, Sa: halogen concentration setting value, Sb: halogen concentration detection value, Sl: optical decomposition optical amount setting value, St: thermal decomposition temperature setting value.

Figure 1

MH metal halogenide
30 halogen adding means
60 halogen concentration control system

Figure 2

⑲ 日本国特許庁(JP)

① 特許出願公開

⑫ 公 開 特 許 公 報 (A) 平1-115182

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29発明の名称 エキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置

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明知事

1. 発明の名称 エキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置 2. 特許請求の範囲

1)レーザ活性物質として希ガスとハロゲンガスを 合みエキシマレーザ装置内に通流される媒体ガス 中のハロゲンの量ないしは進度を制御する装置で あって、エキシマレーザ装置を通して媒体ガスを 外部から閉鎖された閉ループ内に循環させる媒体 ガス頒用系と、世体ガス循環系と結合された閉鎖 容器内に金属ハロゲン化物を保有しその分解によ りハロゲンガスを発生して媒体ガス循環系内の媒 体ガスに添加するハロゲン添加手段と、媒体ガス 循環系内に挿入され媒体ガス中の不要ハロゲン化 合物を含む不能物を除去する不純物除去手段と、 媒体ガス中のハロゲン濃度の検出値ないしは推定 値に応じて媒体ガスのハロゲン濃度を所定値にす るようにハロゲン添加手段のハロゲンガスの発生 量を制御するハロゲン濃度制御系とを備えてなる エキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

2) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、

ハロゲン添加手段が金属ハロゲン化物の熱分解によりハロゲンガスを発生し、ハロゲン温度制御系がこのハロゲン添加手段の金属ハロゲン化物の熱分解温度を制御するようにしたことを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

3) 特許請求の範囲第2項記載の制御装置において、 ハロゲンがふっ葉であり、金属ハロゲン化物としてCoF, が用いられることを特徴とするエキシマレ ーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

4) 特許請求の範囲第2項記載の制御装置において、 ハロゲンがふっ案であり、金属ハロゲン化物としてAgP: が用いられることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

5) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、ハロゲン添加手段が金属ハロゲン化物の光分解によりハロゲンガスを発生し、ハロゲン温度制御系がこのハロゲン添加手段内の金属ハロゲン化物を光分解させるための光量を制御するようにしたことを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装

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6)特許請求の範囲第 5 項記載の制御装置において、 ハロゲンがよっ業であり、金属ハロゲン化物として A g P が用いられることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

7) 特許請求の範囲第6項記載の制御装置において、 AgP が無外光により光分解されることを特徴とす るエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

8) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、 ハロゲン添加手段が媒体ガス循環系に直接挿入されることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス 制御装置。

9) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、 不純物除去手段が固形不純物を媒体ガスから除去 するフィルタを傭えることを特徴とするエキシマ レーザ用條体ガス制御装置。

10) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、不能物除去手段がガス状不純物を媒体ガスから除去する低温トラップを備えることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

11) 特許請求の範囲第 1 項記載の制御装置におい

て、不純物除去手段が媒体ガス循環系内の媒体ガスのエキシマレーザ装置への流入点に挿入される ことを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御 装置。

12)特許請求の範囲第1項記載の預御装置において、媒体ガス中のハロゲン適度がエキシマレーザ装置から出力されるレーザ光の強度から推定されることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制用結構

13) 特許請求の範囲第1項記載の制御装置において、媒体ガス中のハロゲン濃度がガス分析計により検出されることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置。

14) 特許請求の範囲第13項記載の制御装置において、ガス分析計としてスペクトル吸収形が用いられることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御物質

15)特許請求の範囲第13項記載の制御装置において、ガス分析計用のガスが媒体ガス循環系内のエキシマレーザ装置からの彼出点における媒体ガス

から採取されることを特徴とするエキシマレーザ 用媒体ガス制御装置。

3.発明の詳細な説明

(産業上の利用分野)

本発明は紫外光等の波長の短いレーザ光を発展するに適するエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置であって、レーザ活性物質として希ガスとハロゲンガスを含みエキシマレーザ装置内に透流される 媒体ガス中のハロゲンの量ないしは遠度を制御するようにしたものに関する。

(従来の技術)

上述のようにエキシマレーザは2000人程度の短波長の紫外光を発掘するガスレーザ装置であって、Ar. Kr. Keなどの粉ガス原子とPaなどのハロゲン分子とが各1個結び付いたいわゆるダイマーが励起されたエキシマをレーザ活性体とし、このエキシマの解離時に放出される自然放出光が積となって、その後の誘導放出により光を増幅させてレーザ発振を起こさせるものである。このエキシマレーザのレーザ管には上のエキシマになる。ガスとハロ

ハロゲンの結合反応により生起される不能物は レーザ発展に好ましくない影響を与えるので、レーザ発展にかかる無用な不能物を含まない媒体 ガスを上述のようにレーザ智に流す最も簡単な方 法は新しい媒体ガスを常に供給することであるが、 これでは通流率を許容最低限に下げたとしても媒体ガスに含まれる高価な粉ガスがむだに摘要され、

(発明が解決しようとする問題点)

た、電気分解であるから必要なよっ素ガスをその 陽極例で発生させると、陰極例でも不要な水素ガ スが発生してしまい、両ガスが万一混合されると 即座に爆発が起きてしまう。

本発明はかかる問題点を解消して、簡単でかかを全な手段によりハロゲンガスを純粋な形で発生させて媒体ガスに補給するとともに、ハロゲンの反応によって生じうる不要な不純物を含まない媒体ガスをエキシマレーザ無媒体ガス制御装置を得ることを目的とする。

(問題点を解決するための手段)

本発明はレーザ活性物質として紹がスとって、 ないないのでは、 では、 ないでは、 ないでは

い。この放出される媒体ガス中にはもちろん希ガ スが含まれており、それだけ希ガスつまりレーザ 活性物質が失われることになり、もちろんこれと ともにハロゲンガスも放出されるので有害ガスが 外部放出されることになる。また、放出される線 体ガスの大部分を占めるバッファガスはふつうレ ーザ活性物質とは別の希ガスであるから、バッフ ァガスの形でも希ガスがむだに消費されてしまう ことになる。かかる問題を解決するには、ハロゲ ンガスを希釈された形で媒体ガスに複絵するのを やめるしかなく、その解決の一方法として例えば ふっ素の生成に広く工業的に用いられている溶融 K H P z の 電気分解法を利用して、必要な量だけのふ っ霜を補給のつど純粋な形で生成してやることが 考えられる。しかし、かかる電気分解装置は操作 がかなり厄介なほかそれ自身危険が伴う。すなわ ち、エキシマレーザにはふつう2~3気圧の媒体 ガスが用いられるので、ふっ葉の生成もこの圧力 でしなければならず、電気分離時の陰陽両電極韻 娘間の圧力平衡をとるのがかなり厄介になる。ま

(作用)

本発明は上記構成にいうようにハロゲンの生成源として金属ハロゲン化物が利用できることに着日したもので、本発明におけるハロゲン海加手段は開設容器内に金属ハロゲン化物をせることに添加する。
金属ハロゲンを発生してはとくに金属よっ化物が好通で、熱分解用にはせCoP。やAgPaを用いるのがよく、光分解用にはAgP を用いるのがよい。CoP。は 500~700 でに加熱することにより、AgPaはこ

れより少し低目の温度に加熱することとがから発生させることとがが異なった。というないの程度に加熱することにがが異なった。というないを発生させる。 A E P は紫外光を比較的により比較的ない。また、魚解の取り、 会により比較的ない。また、魚解の取り、 会により比較的ない。また、魚解のない。 会により比較的ない。また、魚解のない。 会により比較のない。また、魚解のない。 会によりない。また、魚解のない。 会によりがない。また、魚解のないでははいった。 をはれることが可能なので、、は体がスへのが認要というない。 ないで、ないではない。 ないで、ないではない。 ないで、ないではないで、 ないで、

このようにハロゲン添加手段により発生されるのようにハロゲン添加手段により発生されるのかった。は化学的に純粋で余分なものを含まないから、これを媒体ガスに添加しても媒体ガスの体積が増したり、圧力が上昇したりすることが選ばされた別ループとして、従来のようにハロゲンガスの添加ないしは補給時に外部に知ってきる。しかなるというできる。したりする必要をなくすことができる。しか

といえるが、実用的には媒体ガス中のハロゲン温度が落ちてくるとレーザ出力も落ちることを利用して、レーザ出力から間接的にハロゲン温度を推定することでふつう充分でありかつ実用的である。
(実施例)・

以下、図を参照しながら本発明の実施例を説明する。以下の実施例ではレーザ活性物質としての希がスにはMrが、ハロゲンにはふっ素がそれぞれ用いられるものとし、バッファガスとしてはArが用いられるものとする。第1図はハロゲン派加手段30として熱分解によりふっ素を発生させる実施例を示すものである。

第1図において、エキシマレーザ装置10ではその選体内にレーザ管11が納められており、その両端は透明な窓12で開旗されていて、これらの窓12の外側にはレーザ共振系を形成する部分反射鎖15と全反射線16が配設されている。レーザ管11の図の左右の膨出部には1対の放置電極13が設けられており、高圧電源14により両電極13、13間を放電させることによりレーザ管内の媒体ガスに含まれ

ハロゲン濃度制御系はハロゲン添加手段の熱分解温度や光分解用光量を制御することによって所望の平でハロゲンを発生させるが、この制御を通確に行なうには媒体ガス中のハロゲン濃度をできるだけ正確に知る要がある。このハロゲン濃度の検出はガス分析計によるのが理論的には最も正確

る Krとふっ素を励起できるようになっている。この助起によってレーザ発援が起こり部分反射線15 例からレーザビーム LB が図の左方に向けて出力される。

レーザ管11の両端部には媒体ガス用入口11aと出口11bとが設けられ、媒体ガス循環系20の配管がこれに接続される。媒体ガス循環系20はガス循環系20はガス循環系のアン21と若干の弁と配管からなる閉鎖されたガスループで、このループにハロゲン添加手段30と不統物除去手段50とが挿入されている。井22は媒体ガス循環系に最初に媒体ガスを充塡するともの空気の放出用で、運転時には常に閉じられている。

ハロゲン添加手段30は閉鎖容器31内に電熱板32と金属ハロゲン化物HHを入れた皿33を収納したもので、付属の温度調節器34により電熱板32の温度を、従って皿33内の金属ハロゲン化物HBの温度を正確に制御できるようになっている。この例では閉鎖容器31は出入口を持ち、螺体ガス循環系内の 螺体ガスが直接閉鎖容器31内を流れるようになっ ているが、出入口を共通として媒体ガス循環系の配管にそれを接続するようにしてもよい。 金属ハロゲン化物 MRは例えば CoP。であり、 電熱板 32によって 500~700 でに加熱される。 かかる 高温部分は媒体ガスのよっ葉と反応しやすいので電熱板 32や皿 33の材料にはモネルメタルを用いるのが望ましい。

不純物験去手段50はフィルタ51と低温を罪52をとからなっており、低温トラップは低温容罪52をジャケット53との間に満たした例えば液体窒素54により冷却するようになっており、その入口52sから導入された媒体がスを出口52bから導出する。冷化された媒体がスを出口52bから導出する。クィルタ51によっては媒体がスカ中の固形の不純物除去され、低温トラップによってはがスカウによりが除去手段50はこの例におけるように媒体がスが除去手段50はこの例におけるように媒体がスの流入点に最も近くで発するのが望まより、介えの流入点に最も近く環系20の配管、弁およりにより媒体がス循環系20の配管、弁およのにより媒体がス循環系20の配管、弁およのによりにはなるに表もでは、不20の配管、弁およりによりには、

常の運転時にはハロゲンの制御用には推定値Saの方を用いるのが便利である。マイクロコンピュータはこの推定値Saを操作器61を介してあらかじめ設定されている基準値と比較し、推定値Saが基準値を下回わったとき、温度指定値Stをその出力インタフェース60bを介してハロゲン派加手段30の温度調節器34に与える。

第1図の左下側部にはレーザ音11と媒体ガス循環系20に最初に充填すべき媒体ガス用のボンベ71~73が示されており、例えばボンベ71はKr用、ボンベ72はバッファガスとしてのAr用、ボンベ73には減圧弁71a~73。がそれぞれ付属しており、それらの出側に波量調整弁74~76がそれぞれ接換なる環境に介えるがあれている。媒体ガスの初期には、波圧弁71a~73。および共通弁77を開いた状態で流量調整弁74~76それぞれにつがた状態では、減圧弁71a~73。および共通弁77を開いた状態で流量調整弁74~76それぞれにつがと、減圧弁71a~73。および共通弁77を開いた状態で流量のから開度指令を発して所定の比率でガスを媒体ガス循環系20に送る。この際の媒体ガス中の成分

ロゲン添加手段30に付着していて媒体ガスに混入 して来る不純物がエキシマレーザ装置内に侵入す るのを防止できる。

ハロゲン 渥度 制 御 系 60は 例えば 簡単なマイクロ コンピュータで構成でき、その入力インタフェー ス60a に例えばキーボードである操作器61が接続 されている。この入力インタフェース60m に与え られている信号Saは媒体ガス中のハロゲン温度の 推定値であって、エキシマレーザ装置から発しら れるレーザピームL8中に置かれたごく小さな鏡62a ないしはピームスプリッタからのレーザ光を受け る光検出器62から発しられる。この実施例ではガ ス分析計63がははガス循環系20のエキシマレーザ 装置からの媒体ガスの波出側に弁634.63b を介し て接続されており、それからのハロゲン違度の検 出値5bもハロゲン渥度制御系60のマイクロコンピ ュータの入力インタフェース60g に与えられてい る。しかし、このハロゲンの検出値Sbの方は、最 初にエキシマレーザ装置のレーザ管11および媒体 ガス循環系20に鎮体ガスを充塡する際に用い、通

比は例えばArを96.5%、Krを3.0%、ふっ素を0.5%とする。媒体ガスの初期充城の終了後は、ガス分析計63によりハロゲンガス濃度を確かめた上で弁77および減圧弁71a~73aをすべて閉じる。これによって、媒体ガス循環系20は初期充壌系から切り舞され、外部から完全に閉鎖された閉ループとなる。

第2回はハロゲン添加手段40に金属ハロゲン化 物の光分解を用いた実施例を示すものである。こ

の実施例におけるハロゲン添加手段以外はすべて 第1図に同じであるので、以下図示のハロゲン派 加手段40についてのみ説明する。このハロゲン路 加手段の本体は閉鎖容器41であって、透明な例え ばふっ化カルシウムからなる窓(2を備え、この窓 下に金属ハロゲン化物##が乗せられた皿43が納め られる。この実施例でも閉鎖容器41の出入口は緩 体ガス循環系20の配管に直接接続され、媒体ガス が閉鎖容器41内に通流される。金属ハロゲン化物 MHとしては前述のようにAgP を用いるのがよく、 この光分解用に例えばクセノンランプや水銀ラン プ等の紫外光源44が設けられ、点灯回路45によっ て駆動される。 紫外光源44からの紫外光はレンズ 46によって窓 42を通して金属ハロゲン化物 NB上に 集光されるが、この紫外光路中に操作器48により 制御される絞り47ないしはスリットが設けられ、 操作器48によって絞り47を通る業外光量が前額で きるようになっている。操作器48には、前の実施 例と同様にハロゲン満度制御系60のマイクロコン ピュータからハロゲン渥度の推定値Saに基づいて

光量指定値型が与えられ、操作器48は該指定値型に合うように絞り47の関度を制御してハロゲン添加手段40のよっ素発生量を制御する。図には示されていないが、金属ハロゲン化物HBを若干加熱できるよう皿43の下に電熱板を設けて光分解を促進できるようにしてもよい。

るようにしてもよい。 ただし、 この際には媒体ガス中に含まれる不純物がガス分析上の妨害因子となることがあるから、 実施例で述べたと同様な小形の不純物除去手段を被分析ガスの採取側に設けるのが望ましい。

〔発明の効果〕

をこれによって除去して、エキシマレーザ装置に 不統物を含まない正常な媒体ガスを通流してレー ザ発張条件を良好に維持することができる。

このように、本発明はエキシマレーザ装置の選 転径費を削減しかつ公客等のトラブルを有効に予 助しながら、ハロゲン速度制御系により媒体ガス の組成を自動的に制御かつ管理することを可能に するもので、エキシマレーザ装置の実用化と一層 の発展とに貢献することが期待される。

4. 図面の簡単な説明

図はすべて本発明に関し、第1図および第2図はハロゲン添加手段によるハロゲンの発生にそれぞれ金属ハロゲン化物の熱分解および光分解を利用した本発明によるエキシマレーザ用媒体ガス制御装置の実施例の構成図である。図において、

10: エキシマレーザ装置、11: レーザ管、11a: レーザ管の入口、11b: レーザ管の出口、12: 透明 窓、13: 放電電極、14: 放電用高圧電源、15: 部 分反射鏡、16: 全反射鏡、20: 媒体がス循環系、 .21: ハロゲンガス循環用ファン、22: 放出弁、30:

金属ハロゲン化物熱分解形ハロゲン添加手段、31: 閉鎖容器、32:電熱板、33:皿、34:温度調節器、 40: 金属ハロゲン化物光分解形ハロゲン添加手段、 41: 闭 镇 容 器 、 42: 选 明 窓 、 43: 皿 、 44: 紫 外 光 課、45:点灯回路、46:塩光用レンズ、47:拉り、 48: 収り用操作器、50: 不施物除去手段、51:フ ィルタ、52: 低温トラップ用低温容器、52a,52b: 低温容器の出入口、53:ジャケット、54:液体窒 素、60:ハロゲン達度制御系ないしはそれ用のマ イクロコンピューク、60a:マイクロコンピュータ 光検出器、62a:小鏡、63:ガス分析計、63a,63b: ガス分析計用ガス採取弁、71: Kr用ポンペ、72: Ar用ポンベ、73: Ar希 駅ハロゲン用ポンベ、71a ~73b:波圧弁、74~76:流量調整弁、77:媒体ガ スの初期充塡用弁、DS:検出指令、LB:レーザビ 指定値、Sb:ハロゲン濃度検出値、St:光分解用 光量指定値、St:熱分解用温度指定値、である。



